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Mr. *JEFFERY*'s  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
Cathedral Church of *Norwich*,

MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>. 169<sup>5</sup>.

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THE FREE  
WILL

General Church of Norway  
PASTOR

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the  
*Cathedral Church of Norwich,*

MARCH 8<sup>th</sup>. 169<sup>5</sup>.

BEING  
The Second Sunday in *Lent*.

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By JOHN JEFFERY, Arch-Deacon of  
*Norwich*, and Minister of *St. Peter of Mancroft*.

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Ἑορτὴ γδ (Thuc.) ἐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ τὸ πὰ δένειντα ποσά-  
τειν. ——— ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰὶ παροσκεινάζων ἐαυτὸν ποσὸς τὸ  
ἀληθινῶς ζῆναι. ——— αἰὶ ἄγει τὰς Παροσκεινάζας. Origen  
contra Celf. L. 8.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *William Rogers*, at the *Sun* over-against *St.*  
*Dunstan's Church* in *Fleetstreet*, 1696.





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To the Right Worshipfull,  
**Augustine Briggs Esquire,**  
Mayor of the City of  
**N O R W I C H.**

S I R,

**I** Cannot express a truer or greater  
Regard to You, (in compliance with  
whose Desires this Discourse is made Pub-  
lick) than (agreeably to the Subject of it)  
to Wish and Pray, that You may be ef-  
fectually prevailed upon thereby, seriously  
to fore-think what Your Last Wishes  
shall be; and to make Your Present Re-  
solutions accordingly, viz. To live the  
Life of the Righteous, and then, You  
shall

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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shall Die the Death of the Righteous, and Your last End shall be like his. *This I do most heartily With and Pray for, on behalf of You and of all those, for whose Souls I am more especially concerned, for I am, in the best and highest Sense,*

Your Faithfull Servant,

John Jeffery.

## Numb. XXIII. 10.

---- *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

**I**N these Words we have the very good *Wish* of a very *bad Man*, and upon a very remarkable *Occasion*. The *Man* was *Balaam*; One of Numb. 22. as ill a character almost, as any that is mention'd in the Holy Scriptures. The *Wish* is, That he might die the death of the *Righteous*, and that his last end might be like his. In which *Wish* it is implied, That the *Portion of the Wicked* is not fit to be desired; but that the *Portion of the Righteous* is such, as even those men who are most contrary would desire. 23, 24, 25.

This *Wish* *Balaam* made upon a very remarkable *Occasion*, viz. When he consider'd the last Result and Consequence of things; when he had a distinct Prospect of the final State of Men. 'Twas *Balaam* that said this; *the man whose eyes are open* (or whose Eyes once were shut, but now are open) he said this, *who heard the words of God, which saw* Numb. 24. *the Vision of the Almighty falling into a Trance, but ha-* 3, 4. *ving his eyes open.* God represented unto *Balaam* the

the final State of the *Righteous*: and it appear'd so desirous to him, that (altho' he was one of the worst of Men, and most hated the *Righteous*, yet) he brake forth into these Expressions, *Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

The Truth contain'd in which words, is this, That there is a Portion which wicked men necessarily desire, but the *Righteous* only can enjoy. And,

The Desire of this Portion, by wicked Men, has a *Threefold* Respect.

1st. To what is to come.

2ly. To what is past.

3ly. To what is present.

With respect to what is to come; wicked Men shall wish, That they might escape the *Misery* due unto Sin; and that they might obtain that *Happiness*, which is the Reward of Obedience. With Respect to what is past, wicked men shall wish they had chosen the *Duty* they refused; and that they had refused the *Sin* they chose. With Respect to what is present, wicked Men shall wish, That they were not the Sinners they are; and that they were the *Righteous*, which they are not.

1st. Wicked Men shall wish, with Respect to what is to come.

1. That they might escape the *Misery* due unto Sin: And,

2. That

2. That they might obtain that *Happiness*, which is the Reward of *Obedience*.

1. Wicked Men shall wish they might escape the *Misery* due unto *Sin*: and in that sence, *Die the Death of the Righteous*, and that their last End might be like his.

When wicked Men have before them the Appearance of their *End*; they must needs behold such things in it, as are most *amazing* and terrible to them. And such an Appearance of the *Last things* there will be unto wicked Men, when ever they are constrained to consider.

Such *constraint* is sometimes upon them while they are in Health and Safety: as often as God, by over-ruling the Vanity of their Minds, makes them *serious*. I need not show by what means God does this: 'tis sufficient to my present purpose, that this is sometimes done: and that when it is done, wicked Men have the most uncomfortable Prospect of things before their eyes.

And when their natural *Death* and *last End* draws near, then the Object is more distinctly viewed, and more seriously considered. Then Men perceive what the Desert, and what the Punishment of Sin is: and then they remember they have committed such Sins.

B

But

But no Man can be willing to have his Portion in Misery, or to suffer what he is conscious he has deserved. Men naturally and necessarily have Torment and Perdition; and 'tis not any Man's direct choice, that he be miserable: No Man can be Indifferent to it; or Unconcerned at it. The Sinner's Guilt consigns them to Misery: and the onely way to escape that Misery, is by the Pardon of their Sins. 'Tis Pardon alone that can deliver them from the approaching Perdition; and therefore, that Pardon is the matter of their most importunate Desires. *Lord have Mercy on us*, is their Petition: and Isa. 33. 14. the meaning of it is, that they may *not come into the place of Torment*. This, every departing Soul will most ardently Desire: nor can He avoid desiring it; with the utmost Vehemence, that is possible. Desires stronger than Death, will then harass the guilty Mind: and those Desires are therefore an extream Vexation, because (at the same time) they are Violent, Unavoidable and Vain. The same wicked Man, who most passionately desires to escape Misery, knows he *cannot*: and the Unnatural desire of what is utterly impossible, is tormenting. But such Desires there are in every *dying Sinner*, who is not so *dead in Sin*, as to be totally without any sense of his Danger.

Beyond

Beyond the Grave, deep as the bottomless *Abyss*, is that Region, where miserable Souls abide the Wrath of God (*a*): and into that, the drooping Thoughts of a dying Sinner do descend; and by his dire Imagination, Ranges in that vast Ocean of Darkness, Despair, and Horror (*b*). The departing Spirit must needs Reluctate and Shrink back, with the utmost Uneasiness of Nature, when it feels it self dropping into that remediless Condition. The Spirit struggles in Wishes contrary to its Doom, and suffers the Violence of invincible Necessity; and is dragged thereby, against all the reluctant Endeavours that are possible.

2. Wicked Men shall wish they might Obtain that *Happiness*, which is the Reward of *Obedience*. The Attainment of that Happiness and Ascent unto the glorious Regions of the *Blessed*, is that, which those Minds that are depressed with Guilt and Condemnation, strive in Vain to Raise themselves unto. Divine Glories dazzle the Eyes, and confound the Minds of the *Guilty*; while the same Glories Transport the Hearts, and Constitute the Blessedness of the *Righteous*. But, through all that Confusion, the Sinner lifts up his Desires, unto Rest and Bliss.

(a) ——— *Miserrimus omnes  
Admonet, & magnâ testatur voce  
per umbras.  
Dicite Justitiam moniti, & non  
temere Divos.  
Virg. Æn. l. 6.  
Inclusi panam expectant. —*

(b) *Qua scelerum facies? —*



The divine Purity, and the Image of a Holy God, which is upon the Souls and Lives of those who are Happy, is so contrary to the Sinner's Inclination and Temper, that the Sufferings of Hell cannot make a wicked Spirit unfeignedly desire the Holiness of Heaven. But there is another Notion under which the perishing Sinner considers Heaven, and that is merely as a place of Rest and Ease. There is Rest and Ease, which (in general) every one Desires; and (without advancing one Thought further) wicked Men Wish for that Rest and Ease. 'Tis manifest (if they do think) that the Ease and Rest of Heaven, is inseparable from, and the Effect of the Similitude, and Enjoyment of God; and for a wicked Spirit to Consider this, is Torment. But (stopping short of that Reflexion) Indolency of Body, and Tranquility of Mind are what an Epicurean would desire for his Happiness: and (without considering from whence that Ease and Joy must come) Sinners Wish this may be their Portion for ever. While it was in their Power, to secure the Rest, and Joy of Heaven, they sought their Pleasure from Sense and Sin: and when the Means and Causes of that Pleasure fail, the Desires of that Pleasure continue, though the Sinner know not how to procure it.

*Tull. de fin.*  
*l. 2. Tus.*  
*Qu. l. 3.*  
 §. 38.

But



But wicked men are a *Contradiction* to themselves; and their Wickedness has made them so. They desire *Rest* in the midst of Perturbation; and *Joy* in the Operation of the Causes of Sorrow. But *who can avoid* those Desires, when he even feels that the perfection of Happiness, or the extremity of Misery must instantly befall him? such Distress and Perplexity does a Man's Wickedness bring him unto; because the Consequences of his Sin, are contrary to the strongest Instinct of his Nature. The wicked Man knows what the *Hope* of the *Righteous* is, in his *Death*; and what must be his own portion at his last End. The wicked also desires, on his own behalf, that he might *die the Death*, and that his *last End* might be like unto that of the *Righteous*.

— τὸ τιθε  
κακίαν ἀ  
νομλίαν  
ἵνα πῶς  
τεσπερ  
ἀνομολογί  
αν  
Plut vit.  
Crass.

Prov. 14.  
32.

Thus wicked Men desire they may at last, have the Reward of the Righteous without being Righteous. They desire to escape that Misery which their Sin has made necessary, and they desire to obtain that Happiness which their Sins have made impossible. So inconsistent are the *Choices* and the *Wishes* of bad Men, that while they chuse *Death*, in chusing Sin; they desire to obtain *Life* and *Happiness*, notwithstanding that Choice. They would be happy, and yet refuse that, without which, no Man can be happy: they would not be miserable, and

and yet make themselves such as cannot be otherwise.

All this is done by sinfull Men, *i. e.* by those who are endowed with *Reason and Foresight*, and can be astonish'd at infinitely less Absurdities in other matters. They can decry and wonder at the Folly of those who desire to be *Rich*, and practise what is impoverishing; who desire to be *honoured*, and do what is infamous. What Infatuation then is it for the same Men obstinately to chuse the necessary causes of Misery, and as obstinately to wish for the Enjoyment of Happiness? Remember this, and bring it again to mind, O ye Transgressors; consider and shew your selves Men. Such palpable Contradiction there is between the Desires and the Choices of Sinners, through the whole Course of their Lives: and the frequent Admonitions of God and Men concerning this, must needs prove, at last, one of the most afflicting Remembrances, that is possible. This will exasperate the Torments of Hell; to call to mind, That all his days, the Sinner did with equal Passionateness, chuse Destruction, and wish for Salvation. Thus the Desires which are in Wicked Men, of the Portion of the Righteous, have a respect to what is to come: and so wicked Men wish at last, That they might escape the Misery due unto Sin; and that they might obtain that

that *Happiness* which is the Reward of *Obedience*.

2ly. The *Desire* of this *Portion* by wicked Men, has a Respect to *what is past*, and so wicked Men shall wish,

1. That they had *refused* the *Sin* they chose :  
And,

2. That they had *chosen* the *Duty* they refused.

1. Wicked Men shall wish at last, that they had *refused* the *Sin* they chose. At the time of their *Account*, and at all other times, in which wicked Men are *considerate*, and have their final State in distinct View, they wish (with the utmost Impatience) that they had *refused* the *Sin* they chose, because, so they had *refused* *Death*, in refusing *Sin* (which is the meritorious Cause of Death.) *Life* and *Death* were set before them in this World, and then they made their Choice, which they must abide by for ever. They had indeed a *Liberty* while they lived here of *Retraction* : they might have corrected the Choice which was *bad*, by making *one* that was *good*. Those Sinners who had chosen *Sin* and *Death*, had a *Liberty*, and were under an Obligation to *repent*, and to chuse *Life* and live. But that *Liberty* did not continue longer than the time of their *Probation* : this *Life*, and this *Liberty* ended together. When this time is at an end, that Choice which was made in it, must be stood to ; and there

Deut. 30.  
15, 19.

is

\* Math. 25.  
11, 12, 13.  
† *Disfultet  
in seram  
commiffa  
piacula  
mortem.*  
Virg. *Æn.*  
1. 6.

is no correcting that Choice after Death \*: I had almost said, nor at it †. But altho' a Sinner has spent all that time in which he should have avoided his foolish and pernicious Choices, or at least, should have corrected them; yet he cannot avoid at last repenting that he has chosen so ill for himself, and wishing (without end, and without Patience) that he had refused the Sin he chose, because in so doing, he had also refused that Death he suffers. The perishing Sinner has not only his Choice of Sin to repent of, but also his *Obstinacy* in chusing it: and that no consideration could withhold him from making of, and persisting in that Choice.

Prov. 1.  
24, &c.

Yea (which is a special *Aggravation* of his Fault and Folly) he did in this Life, often repent in that Kind, though not in that Degree, in which he shall repent at last. He who in the Hour of Death, and in that Eternity which is after it; repents (wishing he had never chosen Sin) shall then remember, that those Wishes are not the first he made of this kind: that he did before this, wish he had never done such things, as he perishes for. The last, and the endless Repentings of a Sinner in Hell, will be aggravated by his Remembrance, that he often so repented upon Earth. He shall at the same instant cry out, O that I had never done such Sins! and shall then also call to mind, that he had so expressed himself

himself in his Repentings upon Earth. Had he (while he was on Earth) from the time that he made such Wishes (with stinging Remorse) " That he " had never been in such Company, in which he " committed his Sin; that he had never seen the " Face of such an one, by whom he was persuaded " to sin: that he had rather have lost any Good or " suffered any Evil at the time, than been Guilty " of such Wickedness. Had he (I say) then been constant to those wise and necessary Reflections; he had thence forward refused Sin. And if he had done so, he would have *remembred* those Repentings with Joy. But, whereas he was so far *convinced* of his Sin, and so apprehensive of the Consequences of it, while he lived, as to wish (sometimes in great Agonies of Mind) that he had *never* done it. And afterward (perhaps *under* the Uneasiness of remembering how he repented) *again* chose the same Sin: these Repentings and these Wishes, he that is wicked, shall never be able to *forget* in Eternity; and never be able, without Torment, to *remember*. *Cer-* Prov. 5.  
11, 12, 13. *tain 'tis, no Sinner can avoid wishing in Hell, that he had never committed those Sins which brought him thither. We know now, that it must be thus then,* Rom. 6.  
21. *why should we now chuse that, which we shall even wish (with the utmost Passion) we had never refused? Consider this, when any Temptation offers*

it self ; and *make a stand*, till this consideration be well weighed : “ That if I chuse this Sin for this  
 “ Pleasure or Profit, I shall often *before I die*, and  
 “ at *Death* (if I have my Senses and Understand-  
 “ ing ; ) and in *Eternity*, as long as I have a Being,  
 “ *wish* I had never done it.

2. *Wicked Men* shall at last *wish* they had chosen that *Duty* they refused : and wish they had chosen it whatever had befallen them, or *could* have befallen them for so doing. Here, the *Suffering* of Persecution, or Reproach from Sinners : the *missing* that Benefit which Sin could procure ; and the undergoing that Trouble which Duty did imply, or might occasion, was the *Reason* why they did not repent and obey the Commandments of God. Sinners were unwilling to deny their vicious *Inclinations* or their vicious *Company* ; were unwilling to be at the Trouble which Repentance and Mortification would bring with them ; and therefore they would not chuse their *Duty*, though in so doing, they had chosen *Life*. Sinners chuse, notwithstanding, at the same time, to lose any good, or to suffer any evil, to preserve their *Natural Lives* : Yea, they did this when they were uncertain, whether such Losses and Sufferings would preserve their Lives or no : when it might so happen, that by those very Endeavours to preserve Life, they might lose it. The  
 desires

Deut. 32.  
 47.



desires of natural Life, are so natural, that any thing shall be chosen for the sake of it. *Skin for* Job 2. 4. *Skin, yea all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life.* Yea a Sinner would (to save his natural Life) do much of that *Duty* which is necessary to eternal Life. Let it be manifest to him, who is most *Intemperate*, that there is *Poison* in the Wine, and he will not tast it. Let it be certain, that a violent stroke will cut off his Life that seizeth upon what is his Neighbours, and the most *covetous* Person will not touch it. But no Oath to confirm a Threatning, no Anger to incite an Enemy to the Execution of it, no Sword drawn, and Hand stretched forth for that purpose, make Death so certain, as does the *Wrath of God declared from Heaven against all Un-* Rom. 1. 18. *godliness and Unrighteousness of Men.* This Declaration of God is often and expressly repeated in his *Word*; is continually preach'd and proclaim'd by his *Ministers*: We see this in the Holy Scriptures; we hear it with our Ears, and why should not our Hearts be affected with this? And our Lives govern'd by it. A *Man* stands over us, with the Wrath of an Enemy, and with the Instruments of Death, and says, *Do this, or die*: and we do it, nor dare we do otherwise. But *God* says, (with a Voice more terrible than that of Thunder on Mount Sinai) " I am *Jehovah* thy God; thou shalt do so or so;

“ or thou shalt not do this or that. And we are  
 Isa. 51. 12. insensible, and follow the Imaginations of our own  
 Hearts.

But we shall not be able to maintain this *Stupidity* for ever: we shall not be able to avoid the most dreadful *Reflections* on what we have done, that are possible. We shall, when our Hearts are convinced by the *Word of God*, or by the *Flames of Hell*, wish with the utmost Regret and Horror, that we had never stood out one moment against the Calls and Commands of God: that we had never in one particular refused to obey him. All those considerations that prevailed with us, in the day of *Temptation*; to omit, (if not to contemn) our necessary *Duty*, will be remembered with Abomination. That which we *feared*, or that which we *desired*, and through those Passions, violated our Duty, and neglected our Salvation, shall be called to Mind, with unspeakable *Remorse*. The Sinner shall wonder at himself, and reproach himself, and be ready to take *Vengeance* upon himself, that he was so little regardfull of God, in *whose hands our Breath is, and whose are all our ways*.

2 Cor. 7.  
 11.

Job 12. 11. The Sinner, who stands upon the Brink of Eternity, or who is plunged into that vast Ocean, shall remember how very small Portions of his time those were, which he spent in the Service of his God, and  
 in



in Care for his Soul: and shall *Wish in vain*, that Amos 8. 5. time could return; that he had the *Day of Grace* in his Power again, that so he might (with those Thoughts that now swallow him up) improve the *Opportunities* of performing his *Duty*, and *Working out his Salvation*. But, *Time* cannot be set back; nothing will then be possible, but direfull Remembrances of *Time mis-spent*, and as direfull Reflections upon its being *irrecoverable*. That *Work* which is *undone* then, must be undone *for ever*: And who can call to mind, how impracticably, and how perniciously he has lived, to himself, (*neglecting the great* Heb. 3. 8, 15. & 4. 7. *Salvation*) without unexpressible Horror? This will be the *Case* of every Sinner at the last, who shall then *Wish* he had ever refused that *Sin* he chose; and ever chosen that *Duty* he refused.

Thus we see what the *Wishes* of Sinners are, in the day of their *Extremity*, and *Sensibleness*, whether They look forward on *what is to come* (of the *Happiness* of the Righteous; or the *Misery* of the Wicked,) τὸ ὅσον αἰσίου τῆς αἰσίου, τὴν μέγα μὲν αἰσίου πέναν or whether He looks backward upon *what is past*, αἰσίου, τὴν μέγα μὲν αἰσίου πέναν (the *Sin* he has committed, or the *Duty* he has violated.) But *in vain*, and to their Torment, do wicked Men *Wish* they might Obtain that *Happiness*, αἰσίου, τὴν μέγα μὲν αἰσίου πέναν or Avoid that *Misery*: That they had Forsaken their *Sin*, or Performed their *Duty*. αἰσίου, τὴν μέγα μὲν αἰσίου πέναν

3ly. The Desires which wicked Men shall have at last, of the Portion of the Righteous, has then respect to *what is present*: for They shall then Wish,

1. That they *were not the Sinners* they are: And,
2. That they *were the Righteous persons* they are not.

1. They shall Wish at last, that they *were not the Sinners* they are. The meaning of this Wish is, That they were not under such *Guilt* as they have contracted: and that they were not so *Viciously inclined* as they are. By their past Sins (which they have not Repented of) they are *consigned* to the Misery they fear: and by their prevailing sinfull Disposition, they are incapable of the Happiness which the Righteous enjoy.

Under that Guilt, and with that Temper, Sinners appear *before God*, who knows what they are, and what they *have done*. And the same *Appearance* every Sinner, at certain Seasons, hath unto *Himself*. When a Sinner has (as *Balaam*, when he spake the words of the Text, had) a distinct Prospect, and affecting Representation of the *last things*, then his Conscience awakens, and shows him to himself, in all the odious Characters that a Sinner shall appear, at the Judgment-Seat of God. He then considers *what He is*; and that *God* does, and will account him such an one as he is.

But

But the Sinner who considers this, knows that Wickedness is *abominable* in the sight of God; and that He (who has committed Wickedness, and not Repented of it) is abominable unto God for it. "How shall I (says the Sinner, when he becomes sensible what it is to be such a Sinner:) How shall I appear before God? How shall I *stand in* Psal. 1. 5. *Judgment*? And what can such an One as I, expect from Him, who is a God of *purser eyes than* Hab. 1. 13. *to behold Iniquity*? Where shall the *Ungodly and* 1 Pet. 4. 18. *Sinner appear*? And such a frightened Conscience will be apt to suggest, That 'tis altogether uncertain, whether the Person shall have *Time* or *Heart*, to Repent: and That (for ought he knows) He must, in the same Condition that his Soul *now is*, receive his final *Doom*. What *Perplexity* must a wicked Man be in, when he has these Thoughts abiding vigorously upon his Spirit? and what manner of person shall he then wish he were? Sure he will Wish he were such an one, as God will *forgive*: That he were *not guilty* of such heinous Sins: That he were freed from that vicious Disposition: That he had the Character and Heart of a *Penitent*, that so he might hope for Mercy.

But if a Sinner can be thus *Distressed* by his guilty Conscience, when he is in Health and Safety, and Confidence of Life; What must be his Case? What  
the

the Workings of his Mind, when he is upon a *Bed of Sickness*, and *Death*? When he is *Departed* into the other World, and when he shall be *Awakened* out of the Sleep of the Grave, by the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and the Trump of God? Then he will Wish (with all the Vehemency that is possible; and with such Confusions, as no man can now imagine) that he were *not* the Sinner he is. He shall wish this, and wish it *in vain*; for he cannot, by all the Wishes that are possible, *become other than he is*. Those Wishes can make no *alteration* in the State of his Soul; and those Means which were provided in order to the Conversion of a Sinner, now *are not*. The *Time* in which that Change should have been made, is *gone*; is *gone for ever*. The despairing Soul of a wicked Man shall cry out (in *Agonies* more violent and insupportable than those of Death) “O that I were not among the Enemies of God! “(this accursed and forlorn Society to which I belong!) O that I could now be *changed into another Man*; and that I were as contrary to what I am, as is possible. But he that shall utter such Wishes, shall *know*, that he must be *judged* according to what has been *done* by him in the *Body* in time past; and that he is now such an one, as his past wicked Life has made him to be. What he *now is*, does depend upon what he *has formerly done*: And the

2Cor. 5.10.

the Character of a wicked Man is, That he is one *who has lived wickedly, and never so repented as to live otherwise.* This is the Quality of a Sinner : and this is no more to be *put off* by any Wishes, that can be made, or any Action that can be done by him, at last, than he can make *that not to have been done which was done ; or make that to have been done, which was not done.* All the Consternation, and Exclamation that a Man is capable of, can make no *Alteration* in the State of his Accounts which is drawn up according to what is *past.* Yet cannot Sinners see what the final condition of such will be, without wishing (in the most passionate manner) that they *were not what they are : that they were not the Sinners they are.*

2. Wicked Men shall at last wish, they were those *Righteous Persons* they are not. When Sinners appear to themselves *what they are ;* and appear unto the Judge (who knows them more perfectly than they can know themselves) they do also see *others*, who are contrary to them in their Lives and Characters. They know *who* they are, and what manner of Persons they are, whom they *scorned and hated*, whom they maligned and persecuted : and they know what the *Reason* was of their Ill-will against them, and their Contempt of them. They lived among such as were *Righteous*, such as minded

the things of a better World, and sought their Satisfaction from the Hopes of Heaven, and their Communion with God: they employed the greatest part of their Care and Time, in impressing upon their Souls and Lives, the Image of God; that so they might be fitted by the Likeness of God, for the Enjoyment of him. They chose the exercise and the Company of those who studied divine Wisdom, and practised divine Vertue. They kept themselves unspotted of the World; and would not, for the sake of carnal Pleasure, or earthly Riches, or secular Honour, adventure upon those wicked Courses that others took. By this the Righteous were distinguished from the wicked, and became contrary to them. For this they were hated by the Wicked, and shut out of their Friendships and Affections. The characters of Holiness that appeared upon their Speech and Conversation, did manifest what manner of Persons they were, and such Persons Sinners had in Abomination.

Jam. 1. 27.  
1 Joh. 2.  
16.  
1 Pet. 4. 4.

By the same Marks which formerly Sinners knew and distinguished the Righteous as the Objects of their Malice, they shall at last remember them with Emulation; wishing themselves were such as these (once despised and persecuted) righteous Men are. Sinners shall wish then (at Death and Judgment) that they themselves had been as much rejected and injured



injured as the Righteous were, so they might at the great and terrible day of the Lord, stand before the divine Tribunal, with that Advantage which the Righteous do. But as the Righteous shall then have their Character and Distinction according to what they did in the Body; So the Sinner, who did not those things, but the contrary, cannot (with all his Outcries and Importunities) make himself such an one as the Righteous are. He cannot put on so much of the Similitude of the Righteous, as once was done in *Hypocrisie*. He is not a righteous Person; and he cannot make a shew of such an one: he cannot then *personate* a religious Man. If he should pretend to it (in any term whatsoever) he would be discovered: he cannot place himself among the Righteous, or expect to pass for such an one. He cannot mingle with the Saints, or come into the Assembly of those, whose Company he shunn'd <sup>Ps. 11. 5.</sup> while he was on Earth. Nay he cannot then act the part of a *Dissembler*: he cannot pretend to that Reverence of God, and love of good Men, which the Hypocrite used to do, and which perhaps himself has sometimes done, in the course of his past Life.

Thus shall wicked Men wish *at last and in vain*, that they *were not* what they are; and that they *were* what they are not, what they cannot (for ever) be.

We see what *that good* is which wicked Men desire, but the *Righteous* onely can enjoy, viz. The Character and the Reward of the *Righteous*. Religion is the *Foundation* of Happiness: and Happiness is the *Perfection* of Religion. That Religion and that Happiness wicked Men shall desire at last (and when they have a distinct View of the last things) wishing they had *lived* that Religion, and that they might *enjoy* that Happiness. But the *Righteous* are they alone, who have *lived religiously* in this World; and the *Righteous* are they alone, who can *live happily* for ever. This is that great Good which wicked Men necessarily, and unavoidably desire, but the *Righteous* only can enjoy.

Sermon  
bonum:

From this Truth we may reprove the *Wicked*, encourage the *Righteous*, and admonish *all* Men.

1. From this Truth we may reprove the *Wicked*, because by this, it is manifest their *Wickedness* is inexcusable, and their *Hopes* are vain. There is a notorious Contradiction between their Lives and their Desires, while they *wish* for the Happiness of the *Righteous*, and *chuse* what renders them incapable of it. They shall be *judged out of their own Mouths*, and their own Hearts shall condemn them.

Lu. 19. 22.

2. By this Truth the *Righteous* are approved and encouraged in their *Duty*, and their *Expectation*, because they live according to the Constitution of Things,



Things, and the Declaration of God. They live, as the *Consciences* of the Wicked tell them they ought to live, and as they shall *wish* at last they had lived. The Righteousness of the Righteous is approved by all true Wisdom, and those who calumniate the religious, are reproached by their own Hearts for so doing.

3. This Truth may be of use to admonish *all* Men, to live the *Life* of the Righteous, and that their *early Beginning* be like his; and then they shall *die the Death* of the Righteous, and their *last End* shall be like his too. Eccl. 12. 1.

And since this will at last be the most serious *wish* of all Men; since those who hated the *Life* of the Righteous will wish they might *die the Death* of the Righteous, and that their *last End* may be like his; what can be more proper, for the *Conclusion* of this Discourse, than that wish of *Moses*; *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End!* Prophet  
as Epimo-  
them.  
Deut. 32.  
29. If Men were but so kind to themselves, and so provident for Eternity, as before the great day of Decision comes (*now*, while they are preparing for it) to place themselves (by a suitable exercise of *Faith*) in those circumstances, in which they must stand at the last Day: and then look upon themselves, as they are at the time of such Representation: did a wicked Man, who knows the

Transf.

Transgressions of his Life, and that feels the Remorse of his Conscience; did he suppose himself laid upon a *Bed of Sicknes and Death*; and view his Circumstances as they will at last be, if he dies, such an one as he now is: did he suppose his Soul separating from the Body, and departing into the secret and invisible Society of the Dead: did he suppose the last Trump sounding, and himself (among the rest of Mankind) awakened out of the sleep of Death, by that dreadful Alarm: did he represent to himself the great and universal Assembly standing together upon the face of the trembling Earth; and beholding the Son of God descending from Heaven, in the Glory of his Father, and his Holy Angels: did he suppose the Judgment-Seat placed and the Son of God set down upon it; the Books opened (that of the Law of God, and Gospel of Christ; that of Mens Lives and Consciences) and the Dead ready to be judged according to the Things written in those Books: did he consider the Distinction and Separation of Good from Bad; the one placed at the Right Hand, and the other at the Left Hand of the Glorious Judge: did he hearken to the Sentence that will then be passed upon each Man according to his Deeds; and view (by Faith) the Execution of that Sentence;

Matth. 25. 33.

*Dextra, quæ ditis magni sub  
membris tendit;*

*Hæc iter Elysiûm nobis, ac læva  
malorum;*

*Exercent penas, & ad impia  
Tartara mittunt;*

Virg. Æn. l. 6.

tence ; looking upon the *Wicked* as falling headlong into the Bottomless Pit ; and looking upon the *Righteous* ascending their Thrones of Glory. I say, did *wicked* Men, often and seriously represent these important Truths unto themselves : did they thus consider their *latter End*, what Effect would that Consideration have upon them?

Thus to do, would be their *Wisdom* ; for thus it will be with them *at last* : and by a due and timely considering, they may prevent, the *worst Things* being their Portion. If Men did consider, they would say (with the greatest Seriousness) *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.* And knowing such a *Wish* cannot be verified merely by vehement Desires and passionate Expressions, they might (at one time or other) be persuaded by such Considerations, to *live the Life of the Righteous* ; and if they did so, They should also *die the Death of the Righteous, and their last End should be like his* : that would be their Everlasting Portion. They should then, not only *make their* — *Quo facta trahunt*  
*Virtus securus sequitur. Luc.*  
*l. 2.*  
 Wishes, but also *have* what they wished : they should (at their great Extremity) be received into the Joy of their Lord.

F I N I S.